



AETC News Clips

Randolph AFB, Texas



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Brooks authority's executive director quits

Web Posted: 08/25/2005 12:00 AM CDT

L.A. Lorek
Express-News Staff Writers

As Brooks City-Base awaits a decision on the fate of its military missions, the research park's executive director resigned Wednesday to take a job in the private sector.

Tom Rumora, the director of the Brooks Development Authority, who has overseen Brooks City-Base since its inception in 2001, resigned to join React, a new company in Michigan that will do BRAC-related work around the country as consultants, property managers and advisors.

"I wish he wasn't leaving," said Howard Peak, Brooks Development Authority chairman. "He's done a great job for us all these years. I appreciate how far he's brought us."

The Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission today is expected to rule on the fate of Brooks City-Base.

For the past four years, city and park officials have worked to transform the historic Air Force base, founded in 1917, into a technology and research park.

The City Council established the Brooks Development Authority to take over the base from the Air Force to save money by taking care of the buildings and grounds.

Rumora will remain acting executive director until mid-September. Alex Briseño, who is serving as interim director of the San Antonio Technology Accelerator Initiative, will then take over as Brooks' interim executive director.

Briseño could not be reached for comment, but a SATAI spokeswoman said the board is close to finding a permanent director.

"I really had no intention of going anywhere," Rumora said. "This is a wonderful opportunity that only comes along every once and awhile."

Rumora will be part owner and chief operating officer of React, which will be looking at 10 or more locations to do work.

"We can be involved in anything literally from coast to coast," Rumora said. "I need to get started because BRAC decisions are being made literally each day."

Rumora's experience in working on other military base realignments in Ohio and Michigan was very helpful in creating Brooks City-Base, said Ramiro Cavazos, the city's economic development director.

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"Tom has served the community well and has given all of his energy to this project," Cavazos said. "I think this is good timing for everyone and allows the board to bring in someone with more research park expertise."

Rumora will be missed, said Councilman Roland Gutierrez, whose Southeast Side district encompasses Brooks.

"But with Alex (Briseño) at the helm as interim, it'll be a smooth transition and it'll show the BRAC commission that we're committed to competent leadership," Gutierrez said.

Assistant City Manager Chris Brady, who's also a Brooks authority board member, said Rumora was instrumental in the base's 2002 transition from the Air Force to the city.

The BRAC commission widely is expected to agree to move the military missions out of Brooks. But Brady said the base's redevelopment is well on its way and that Rumora's departure won't throw it off track.

"Essentially, we're at a good phase for this kind of transition," Brady said. "We've already got momentum."

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Texarkana breathes a big sigh of relief

Web Posted: 08/25/2005 12:00 AM CDT

Sig Christenson
Express-News Military Writer

Texarkana's Red River Army Depot, condemned by the Pentagon three months ago, was ready for the end Wednesday when the reprieve came.

Red River and its 3,500 workers were spared when the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission, commonly called BRAC, agreed in a resounding 9-0 vote that it was critical to wartime readiness.

"This avoids our economy being totally devastated," Bowie County Judge James M. Carlow said. "It's a huge relief."

Red River was one of three Texas installations marked for shutdown in the 2005 BRAC round, the fifth since 1988.

Anchored in East Texas 18 miles from the Arkansas state line, it emerged relatively unscathed while Ingleside Naval Station on the Gulf Coast was ordered closed. Brooks City-Base is on the dreaded BRAC list as well.

Red River was on the hit list 10 years ago, but the 1995 BRAC commission concluded that closure risked readiness. It sent part of Red River's maintenance mission to Anniston Army Depot in northeast Alabama, costing nearly a fifth of its 5,000 workers but letting it stay open.

There was a sense of déjà vu as the commissioners moved two missile recertification programs from Red River to Pennsylvania. They also agreed to mothball a 9,000-acre ammunition storage facility on the depot's grounds, and close Texarkana's Lone Star Ammunition Plant. The area is to lose about 675 jobs but will seek to privatize the plant.

"I'm not going to say it will be easy, but we have a possibility of keeping them," said Jerry Sparks, chairman of the Texarkana Chamber of Commerce's BRAC committee. "We haven't given up yet. If we gave up we wouldn't be this far."

Like cities around the country, Texarkana fought hard to save Red River. A staple of the community since 1942, it's the area's No. 1 employer and has some of the best-paying jobs in the region. Local leaders predicted the 5.8 percent jobless rate would treble, and saw no hope of replacing jobs that pay an average of \$35,000 a year. Workers faced the prospect of following their jobs out of state or remaining in the area and earning much less.

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"The main thing was we kept our jobs," said Doug Scott, a 59-year-old shop manager who has been at Red River for 32 years.

"I could have made it until they closed the depot," said Red River Humvee line supervisor Janice Hampton, 57, of Boxelder, 50 miles west of Texarkana. "There are a lot of people starting their lives out here and the jobs are going to be there."

Texarkana had help from surrounding states whose residents work at the depot, but didn't have as much money in its war chest as many other communities, spending about \$750,000 to make its case. By contrast, the Corpus Christi area raised around \$400,000 late this summer in an effort to convince the commission to move a Navy jet-training mission there.

The Iraq war's impact on the Army's four maintenance depots may have been the deal-breaker this time. Pentagon data used to support the closure recommendation showed plant workers had logged 2.1 million labor hours in 2003. But Red River advocates said that figure had jumped to just under 5 million hours this year, and is projected to top 6.2 million in 2006.

"I think they did what was in the best interests of the Army and the soldiers," said retired Air Force Col. William Ehrie, chairman of the Texas Military Preparedness Commission.

Carlow and others said saving Red River ensures the depot system will meet the Army's needs. He also said Red River dodged a big bullet, noting fewer than one in five closure orders have been reversed in the past.

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S.A. gets a win in BRAC vote

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Gary Martin
Express-News Washington Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — In a day of mixed results for Texas, an independent base-closure panel delivered an economic blow Wednesday to the Coastal Bend but spared San Antonio and Texarkana.

In the first of three days of deliberations, the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission voted to close Ingleside Naval Station and shrink the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station.

But it bucked the Pentagon and decided to keep the Cryptologic Systems Group, which services communications equipment for federal intelligence agencies, at Lackland AFB.

The panel, known as BRAC, also overrode a Pentagon recommendation and voted to keep open the Red River Army Depot, which repairs Humvees and tanks critical to the war in Iraq.

"We had a great win for Red River and Texarkana and a tragic loss at Ingleside and Corpus Christi," said Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, who's leading the state's fight to save military installations from closure.

Hutchison and other state leaders also hailed the decision on the Cryptologic Systems Group at Lackland as a major victory.

"We certainly have had a very action-packed day," she said.

Disappointed by the commission's 5-2 vote to close Ingleside and realign Corpus Christi, Rep. Solomon Ortiz said he would work through the House Armed Services Committee to provide military assistance to the region to recoup from the losses.

"You can't cry over spilled milk. ... You need to regroup, and now we'll do what we can in my committee," said Ortiz, D-Corpus Christi.

The Pentagon has proposed closing or realigning 62 major military bases to save an estimated \$48.8 billion over 20 years.

The BRAC panel has until Sept. 8 to complete a roster of cuts to be submitted to President Bush.

The commission generally went along with the Pentagon's proposals, but made some exceptions to spare bases in Texas, Louisiana, California, Utah and Maine, where the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, which repairs submarines, will remain open.

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"It is not being a rubber stamp," Joe Krier of the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce said of the panel, "but clearly, the bias here is to support the Pentagon recommendations."

Defense Department officials sought closure of four major Texas installations: Red River and the Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant, both in Texarkana; Ingleside and Brooks City-Base in San Antonio.

In addition to Ingleside, the panel voted to close the Lone Star plant, which makes grenades and mortars, eliminating 400 jobs for a savings of \$164 million.

The panel is expected to vote today on Brooks, and closing it could mean the elimination of 3,000 jobs. The panel also is expected to approve a Pentagon proposal to turn Brooke Army Medical Center and Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., into regional super medical centers.

Also pending are decisions on Air Force installations and proposals to close or realign dozens of Air National Guard facilities.

San Antonio leaders were buoyed by the panel's unanimous decision to leave open the Cryptologic Systems Center at Lackland, keeping 800 jobs at the facility that performs classified missions.

"This is a big win," Krier said. "And they did it for the right reasons."

The Pentagon proposed moving the center to Tobyhanna Army Depot, Pa., to save \$28 million.

Retired Brig. Gen. John Jernigan, who leads a San Antonio military task force, said saving the cryptologic center spared one-third of the 3,000 jobs vulnerable to realignment at Lackland.

"The important side of this news is that it's not just the jobs alone but it's the contracting work," said Ramiro Cavazos, the city's economic development director. "The cryptologists work with local firms."

The decision to shutter Ingleside and realign Corpus Christi NAS came on the recommendation by the Navy to move its mine warfare ships and helicopters to fleets in California and Virginia.



(J. Scott Applewhite/Associated Press)

Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison, R-Texas, watches as the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission votes to close Corpus Christi NAS.

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Navy officials said the closure and transfer would net \$614 million in savings but cost the Coastal Bend region 3,000 jobs.

Anthony Principi, BRAC chairman, said the Navy was correct in its recommendation.

Basing the mine warfare capability in the Gulf of Mexico "hasn't worked to their intentions," he said.

"Unfortunately for Ingleside, the naval mine warfare center doesn't belong there, it belongs with the fleet," said Commissioner James Hill, a retired Army general.

The panel voted to approve the recommendation over the objection of two commissioners, former Rep. James Hansen, R-Utah, and former Rep. James Bilbray, D-Nev., who feared the decision could hurt homeland security.

Bilbray said closing Ingleside and Pascagoula Naval Station in Mississippi makes shipping lanes and oil rigs vulnerable and "leaves the Gulf Coast without adequate protection."

Hutchison agreed, telling reporters after the decision that "closing the only deep-water port on the Gulf of Mexico is a mistake."

The panel cited the "prime real estate" of Ingleside as a potential economic generator that would help the Coastal Bend region recover after the base closure.

Ortiz said the panel received "mixed signals" from a community divided over developing the facility and saving military functions. That made it easier for commissioners to decide, he said.

"Some people see this as prime real estate. Yeah, it's prime real estate, but my concern is security," Ortiz said.

The commissioners voted unanimously to spare Red River, saying it was important to maintain a repair center that maintains vehicles critical to the war in Iraq.

"I think it would be a mistake to take away that capacity," said commissioner Lloyd "Fig" Newton, a retired Air Force general.

The motion to keep the base open was made by Sue Turner, a former Air Force general from San Antonio.

The commission did agree to realign part of the Red River depot, sending missile maintenance and other duties, and about 250 personnel, to other Army facilities. But it voted to keep intact maintenance work for Humvees and Bradley Fighting Vehicles, along with 2,250 jobs, at Texarkana.

In other action, the panel voted to realign Fort Hood under recommendations put forth by the Pentagon. The move would send the 4th Infantry Division and 9,000 troops to Fort Carson in Colorado.

Hutchison remained optimistic that Fort Hood could be the recipient of troops returning from Europe who would replace the transfer under the base closure proposal.

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A proposed transfer of the Army's 1st Armored Division from Germany and Korea to Fort Bliss in El Paso, bringing 11,000 soldiers to the state, was also approved by the commission.

The panel also voted to realign the Corpus Christi Army Depot, sending about 84 people involved with storage and maintenance there to a facility in Oklahoma City.

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Ingleside isn't abandoning ship

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Roger Croteau
Express-News Staff Writer

INGLESIDE — The signs proclaiming "Keep America Strong: Save Our Station" still hang in shop windows all over town, but it's time to start taking them down, as the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission voted Wednesday to eliminate Ingleside Naval Station.

But locals weren't in tears upon hearing the news that they fought so hard to stop.

"We'll survive," City Manager Mike Rhea said shortly after watching the 5-2 vote, with two abstentions, on C-SPAN. "This side of the bay is moving. It's going to hurt, but it's not going to kill us. We'll recover. We'll probably recover quickly."

Similar sentiments were heard all over town.

"I'm not too worried about it," tattoo artist Joseph Bowen said. "It could become a shipyard or it could be a college. But it won't sit there empty."

Bowen's co-worker, Lucas Braly, said 60 percent to 70 percent of the shop's customers come from the naval station, which employs about 3,000 workers in this town of 11,000.

"For the owner, it's a bummer," he said. "But even if the shop closes, I can go somewhere else to work. A lot of the people I tattoo are worried about property values falling. I think it will hurt the town, definitely."

Chief Petty Officer Randy Morris, who has been stationed at Ingleside for five years, said he wasn't happy about his expected transfer to San Diego, Calif., with a minesweeping unit.

"But I'll do whatever the Navy tells me to do," he said. "I've moved around so much it's second nature to me."

"I feel sorry for Ingleside, I think it's really going to hurt the town. Hopefully they'll do something good out there," he said. "I'm sure that in time they'll be fine. There might even be more jobs."

Gov. Rick Perry also weighed in on the vote.

"I know in Ingleside and Corpus Christi there is sadness about the decision that BRAC made, but also we see it as an opportunity to go forward," Perry said. "I think Texas has made an extraordinary case that that entire Coastal Bend region is very appropriate for some growth in the military, particularly on the Navy aviation side."

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The Corpus Christi Port Authority has the right of first refusal to buy the 405-acre site, and Ingleside officials are confident something good will happen there after the Navy leaves, even if they don't have a clue what it will be.

"We're disappointed they've chosen to close Naval Station Ingleside, but we do see there are terrific economic development opportunities because of that," said Cathy Hirschman, executive director of the Ingleside Chamber of Commerce.

A tourist draw — perhaps cruise ships using the deep-water port — is one possibility residents speculated about, but there are other ideas too.

"People tell me it looks like a college campus," Rhea said, "and in a lot of respects it does."

Chamber of Commerce President Roger Wright said Charleston, S.C., recovered quickly after it lost a base in the last round of BRAC.

"They converted it into an industrial and residential area and they have a better economy now in that area than they did when it was a naval station," he said.

Wright, who owns a dog kennel, said 23 percent of his business comes from military families, but he's not worried about the future. He said plans are in the works for three new liquefied natural gas plants that will bring more than 1,500 construction jobs and perhaps 200 permanent jobs to town, and that Gulf Marine Fabricators and Kiewit Offshore Services both have major new contracts to build oil platforms.

Rhea said that looking back there is nothing he would change about the city's efforts to change commission members' minds.

"We turned over every rock we could find," he said. "I think we ended up talking to everyone in Washington but the vice president and the president. A lot of hard work, travel and brainstorming by a lot of people were ignored. We had damn good reasons to keep it open, but the Navy wanted it closed from the get-go."



(Billy Calzada/Express-News)

Chief Petty Officer Randy Morris relaxes at a VFW post. After five years at Ingleside, he's not crazy about a transfer and is sorry for the town's loss: 'Hopefully they'll do something good out there' at the naval station.

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25 Aug 05/Sun Herald/Local

Closure was unanimous vote Base, though new, is no longer needed

By KATE R. HOULIHAN
SUN HERALD WASHINGTON BUREAU

ARLINGTON, Va. - With the swift, silent motion of nine arms rising in unison, the Base Realignment and Closure commission sealed Naval Station Pascagoula's fate Wednesday, voting unanimously to close it. Keesler Air Force Base's medical wing could learn its future today, along with other stations in Maryland, North Carolina, Colorado, Illinois and Florida still under threat of losing inpatient services.

The decision to close Naval Station Pascagoula "comes closest to a no-brainer we'll face in the next couple of days," said commissioner Harold Gehman, who was the only member of the panel to speak about the station.

Gehman called it "a wonderful, essentially brand-new naval station," but "this is in excess of what the Navy needs."

Work will continue until Friday, with Air Force decisions up last. As it stands in the BRAC language, if approved as written, the medical center at Keesler would be changed to a clinic with an ambulatory surgery center.

Final recommendations will go to President Bush by Sept. 8 and, if accepted, be passed on to Congress. If Congress does not reject the recommendations, they will be considered final.

The action to close Pascagoula will relocate Naval Station Pascagoula's ships, personnel and support to Naval Station Mayport in Florida. Intermediate repair function will move as well.

The approximately five minutes the commission took for discussion and deliberation on Pascagoula started off with a brief presentation. BRAC senior analyst Brian McDaniels reiterated the immediate payback from closing the naval station and said an estimated 1,700 jobs, or 2.6 percent of employment in the local economic area, would be lost.

The commission was told about issues raised by the community concerning protection of the Gulf Coast, job loss and the military value calculations used.

Members of Mississippi's Washington delegation were upset at the decision, but tried to look to the future. "I regret the commission's decision today," said Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., in a statement issued shortly after the decision. "Naval Station Pascagoula is a fine facility, and the BRAC process has been flawed. This is a new, promising complex which is well-positioned to meet our nation's growing demands for homeland defense... I'll also continue to work with state and local officials to find alternative private uses for the base which will increase its economic contribution to our region. The location and physical characteristics of Naval Station Pascagoula make it an excellent site for a variety of public and private uses."

Sen. Thad Cochran, R-Miss., said he was not surprised the commission voted as it did, although he was a bit put off by Gehman's "no-brainer" remark.

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"It was somewhat gratuitous and unnecessary," he said.

Other bases around the country fared a bit better than Pascagoula, most notably ones in Texas, Connecticut and Louisiana. On the table for discussion are double the number of bases as in previous rounds.

BRAC by the numbers

In the 2005 round so far:

- 30 major closures
- 30 major realignments
- 774 minor closures and realignments

BRAC by the criteria

The following are criteria used to determine which bases will be taken off the Department of Defense's list originally submitted in May and which ones will remain:

Military value criteria

1. The current and future mission capabilities and the impact on operational readiness of the total force of the Department of Defense, including the impact on joint warfighting, training and readiness.
2. The availability and condition of land, facilities, and associated airspace (including training areas suitable for maneuver by ground, naval or air forces throughout a diversity of climate and terrain areas and staging areas for the use of Armed Forces in homeland defense missions) at both existing and potential receiving locations.
3. The ability to accommodate contingency, mobilization, surge and future total force requirements at both existing and potential receiving locations to support operations and training.
4. The cost of operations and the manpower implications.

Other criteria

5. The extent and timing of potential costs and savings, including the number of years, beginning with the date of completion of the closure or realignment, for the savings to exceed the costs.
6. The economic impact on existing communities in the vicinity of military installations.
7. The ability of the infrastructure of both the existing and potential receiving communities to support forces, missions and personnel.
8. The environmental impact, including the impact of costs related to potential environmental restoration, waste management and environmental compliance activities.

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Pascagoula's plea to save homeport fell on deaf ears

Despite an exceptional presentation in defense of Naval Station Pascagoula to the Base Closure and Realignment Commission last month in New Orleans, commissioners on Wednesday voted unanimously to close the facility on Singing River Island.

Even though the decision had long been expected, some hopes were raised by the compelling case made for the homeport by residents of Jackson County. One of them, Gautier businessman Jim Brooks, gave an outstanding defense of Naval Station Pascagoula at the BRAC hearing a month ago. Unfortunately, a harsh reality trumped that splendid rhetoric.

Retired Adm. Harold Gehman, a BRAC commissioner, said shortly before the vote in Washington that closing the Pascagoula base "comes the closest to being a no-brainer that we will face in the next three days."

While acknowledging that "there is absolutely nothing wrong with" the homeport, Gehman said, "Unfortunately, this is an excess of what the Navy needs." And, perhaps even more unfortunate for the port, shutting it down "probably has the highest ratio for return for investment than any recommendation that we are going to be faced with today," Gehman said. By spending \$18 million now to close Naval Station Pascagoula, federal officials expect to save \$666 million over a 20-year period. (Would whoever is around in 2025 please ask to see that \$666 million.)

On the positive side, community leaders have been examining other uses for the prime space soon to be available on Singing River Island.

Now BRAC commissioners turn their attention to recommendations about Air Force bases and we will soon learn the fate of the medical facilities at Keesler. Hopefully, the commission will get this one right. 'Redskin' is not the only 'R' word

Now that the NCAA has decided to let Florida State University retain their Seminole mascot, it will be almost impossible for NCAA officials to deny Utah the use of Utes and difficult for them to interfere with the University of Illinois being the Illini.

Indeed, of the 18 colleges and universities that use mascots that the NCAA believes to be abusive of Native Americans, only one is unquestionably over the line: Southeastern Oklahoma State University, which calls its athletic teams the Savages.

The rest are Braves, Chippewas, Choctaws, Fighting Sioux or Indians. Oh, there is one other: the Redmen of Carthage College. (Women's teams on the Kenosha, Wis., campus are called the Lady Reds.) Redmen is just a tad better than that really infamous "R" word - Redskin.

Indeed, Tim Giago, an Oglala Lakota and president of the Native American Journalists Foundation Inc., is so incensed by the use of Native American athletic mascots that he blasts supporters of them by invoking yet another "R" word - redneck.

Describing a debate on TV on the topic, Giago wrote: "Fox News pitted an obvious redneck against our own Charlotte Teters, a member of the Spokane Tribe, on a recent newscast." We certainly don't mind Mr. Giago trying to rid the world of terms he deems offensive. But denouncing the use of "Redskin" by calling a person a "redneck" reveals a hypocritical lack of another "R" word - respect.

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25 Aug 05/The Mississippi Press

Base closing called a great loss to community

By ALLISON MATHER

Following the midday announcement of the BRAC vote to close Naval Station Pascagoula, reactions large and small rippled through local businesses and schools.

Bruce Grimes owns Brass Hanger Cleaners, with stores in Pascagoula and Gautier. He said the base closing will have a minimal effect on his business.

"I have probably already lost most of the business that I would have because the ships have already gone," he said, referring to the previous decommissioning of cruisers Ticonderoga and Yorktown. "It's a great loss to the community," he continued. "I don't want to minimize the effect on the community -- just on my business."

Grimes said there are few Navy personnel still on Singing River Island; most are civilian employees. And pre-commissioning crews for unfinished ships at Northrop Grumman will still live in the area.

"There's still going to be a lot of Navy business here because of the contingent with the shipyard," he said. "Now the biggest question out there is who is going to own that island out there."

Real estate agent John Jones said the community will miss the Navy presence, but his business has expected the possibility of the base closing.

"It's something that we have been anticipating," he said. "We've watched the build-up of naval personnel decrease over the past few years."

"I really feel like it's going to be a minimal impact, the market is so hot right now," Jones said. Everett Greer, a Century 21 broker, agreed.

"Of course it doesn't bode well, does it?" he said, adding that the recently-announced Northrop Grumman layoffs are also a concern.

"They already effectively closed it down when they pulled those two destroyers (cruisers Ticonderoga and Yorktown) out of service," Greer said.

Greer said most Navy home-buyers are families and most choose to settle in Ocean Springs. "So Ocean Springs is going to feel it more than we will," he said.

As people move from the area, however, they will list their homes with real estate agents, resulting in increased business, Greer said.

"We'll have a pick-up, and maybe Hard Rock (Hotel in Biloxi) will take up some of the slack," he said. Rex Yancey, pastor at First Baptist Church in Pasca-goula, said even though the base closing was expected, the church and community will probably miss the Navy presence.

"Over the years, we've had some really committed soldiers in the past who've gotten involved (in the church)," he said.

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AETC News Clips

Keesler AFB, Miss.



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"I really thought the Navy and Pascagoula, Jackson County, were a good mix."

Pascagoula schools superintendent Wayne Rodolfich agreed.

"It's very unfortunate we are going to lose such a great asset to our community," he said. "The military population represents an important part of our school system, not only in the number of students we have attending, but the many military personnel who have volunteered countless hours to work with our students and in our schools."

The Homeport "adopted" Beach Elementary years ago, principal Shirley Hunter said.

"It isn't really monetary, the way they help," Hunter explained. "They come and help with tutoring. They also help with our field day and Fall Festival."

Hunter said Beach will miss the positive influence the sailors have in the school.

"It will be a loss to us because they really enhance things at our school," she said.

Anna Hurt, Ocean Springs superintendent of schools, said the school district supports and plans for growth of the bases.

"So certainly the closing of any bases around here will affect us," she said.

Hurt said the closure of Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi would be more detrimental, however, because more students from families stationed at Keesler attend Ocean Springs schools.

She said it is good that the base closing will be spread out over a few years.

"That gives the school district more time to experience growth in other areas," Hurt said.



AETC News Clips

Sheppard AFB, Texas



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25-Aug 05

Suspected hacker infiltrates Air Force personnel database

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A suspected hacker tapped into a military database containing Social Security numbers and other personal information for 33,000 Air Force officers and some enlisted personnel, an Air Force spokesman said Tuesday.

That figure represents about half of the officers in the Air Force, but no identity theft had been reported as of early Tuesday, said Tech. Sgt. James Brabenec, a spokesman at the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph Air Force Base.

The case was under investigation.

"Protecting airmen's personnel information is something we take very seriously," Maj. Gen. Tony Przybylski, commander of the personnel center, said in a statement. "We are doing everything we can to catch and prosecute those responsible."

The Social Security numbers, birth dates and other information was accessed sometime in May or June, apparently by someone with the password to the Air Force comput-

er system, Brabenec said.

On Friday, the people affected were notified of steps they can take to protect their identity, he said.

The military, while protecting classified information, has had trouble protecting data about its people, a computer expert told *The Washington Post*, which first reported the story.

"They have historically done much better at protecting operational systems than at protecting administrative systems," said John E. Pike, director of GlobalSecurity.org.

Hacking has been on the rise in commercial industry.

Business leaders in July announced an education campaign to better protect sensitive client information from hackers and other thieves, after a string of high-profile data thefts and losses.

In June, CardSystems Solutions Inc. disclosed that a breach of its system that processes transactions between merchants and credit card issuers exposed 40 million accounts to possible fraud.

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Sheppard AFB, Texas



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25-Aug 05

BRAC panel begins voting

Rumsfeld warns against major changes to Pentagon base recommendations

Tara Copp

Scripps Howard News Service

WASHINGTON — On the eve of BRAC votes, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld again warned that making substantial changes to the Pentagon's 2005 base closure recommendations could have too many unintended consequences.

Even as Rumsfeld warned the BRAC commission against major alterations, chairman Anthony Principi was suggesting that's a real possibility for several of the Pentagon's biggest recommendations, including its proposed closure of Ellsworth Air Force Base in South Dakota and the relocation of Ellsworth's B-1s to Dyess Air Force Base.

The nine-member independent BRAC commission, which has the power to overturn the Pentagon's choices, has spent the last four months combing through thousands of pages of data and has conducted hundreds of meetings with local base

CLOSER LOOK

Votes that affect Wichita Falls:

Vote 38: Close the Wichita Falls Army Reserve Center and move units to Fort Sill, Okla.

Vote 125: Realign Sheppard AFB by relocating front-line maintenance and instructor-qualified personnel to set up the new Joint Strike Fighter headquarters at Eglin AFB, Florida.

Vote 128: Relocating fighter fundamentals training for pilots and weapons systems training from Moody AFB, Ga. to Sheppard AFB.

Vote 172: Realign Sheppard's basic and specialty enlisted medical training to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio.

supporters to perform an independent check on the Pentagon's base closure decisions.

Starting today, the panel will vote on each recommendation. For the BRAC commission to remove a base

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AETC News Clips

Sheppard AFB, Texas



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BRAC continued from Page 1B

from the Pentagon's list, five of the nine commissioners would have to vote to reject the recommendation. The commission is expected to vote today on Army and Navy installations, including Naval Station Ingleside and Naval Air Station Corpus Christi. The Joint Cross Service Group considerations, which affect Sheppard Air Force Base, are scheduled to begin Thursday. Hearings on the Air Force, which affect Dyess, will begin Friday.

As he did in May, Rums-

feld warned that "pulling a thread" from the tightly-interwoven base closure recommendations would lead to "non-intuitive" effects that could hamper the Pentagon's efforts to transform itself.

"They haven't spent 2 1/2 years doing this," Rumsfeld said to reporters, comparing the BRAC panel's four-month analysis to the Pentagon's efforts. "I feel we made very solid recommendations. I think when all is said and done, the commission will endorse the majority of those recommendations."

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Sheppard AFB, Texas



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25-Aug 05

Medical training at Sheppard among hot issues at forum

Michael Hines
Times Record News

Shantel Spraggins hit on the one fear that local leaders still can't alleviate despite their efforts to avoid personnel changes at Sheppard Air Force Base.

The 36-year-old apartment manager wondered that if the medical training portion goes with these military recommendations, would another mission — or worse — be next with future proposals?

Spraggins was one of a handful of attendees at a forum conducted by the Wichita Falls Area Military Affairs Committee and the Board of Commerce & Industry. It was one of two meetings aimed at explaining the counter strategy to recommendations made by the Base Realignment and Closure commission.

MAC chairwoman Kay Yeager told attendees that the committee shared Spraggins' worries.

"I think that's one of the things that concerns us," she said.

At the same time, some change is inevitable, said Darrell Coleman, *Times Record News* publisher and MAC vice chairman.

"The Air Force as we know it is going to get smaller," he said. "The Air Force is going to dramatically change, and Sheppard is going to have to change with it."

Tuesday saw both public forums focus on the strategies first presented in San Antonio and to BRAC staffers in Washington D.C. weeks later.

The approaches impressed many at the morning forum. About 30 people paid to attend the Remington Hotel gathering and seemed supportive of the ideas. It certainly sounded good to Jerry Bettenhausen, Work Services Corporation CEO.

"I thought it was great," he said. "I think our team put together a very positive presentation."

At the evening presentation held at the Multi-Purpose Events Center, fewer than 30 people attended. Spraggins said the ideas were good.

"It was a very nice approach," she said. "It's very honest and very upfront."

But she also had her worries.

"It's hard to take because we don't want to lose," she said.

BRAC recommendations originally slated Sheppard to lose about 2,600 personnel directly. That would cause a total job loss of 4,400 workers and possibly an economic hit ranging from \$80 million to \$120 million.

When MAC members went to the state's lone regional meeting in San Antonio, among their contentions was pointing out other missions that might come to Sheppard; when members met with two BRAC staff members earlier this month, they pressed the case that outdated and outmoded data had skewed the criteria used in assessing military installations. Plus, it could be cheaper to move the first phase of medical mission training entirely to Sheppard. Fort Sam Houston would need to spend more than \$226 million in military construction to handle the added mission. If the medical training came to Sheppard, nearly \$123 million worth of construction would be needed.

Explaining all that reasoning went well, Yeager said.

"I think it went well," she said of both presentations.

But too few people were able to get the message locally, Yeager said.

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AETC News Clips

Vance AFB, Okla.



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Vote on Vance realignment could come today

The Enid News and Eagle, Page 1

25 August, 2005

A federal commission decided Wednesday to move air defense artillery units at Fort Bliss in El Paso, Texas, to Fort Sill in Lawton, a move expected to bring thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in economic benefits to southwest Oklahoma.

Army Air Defense Artillery School would come to Fort Sill under the move, which would bring an estimated 3,600 military and civilian jobs as well as the potential for thousands more private sector positions through a financial ripple effect, said John Bonsell, senior military adviser to Sen. Jim Inhofe, R-Okla.

Lawton Mayor John Purcell said city officials were "outstandingly happy" with the decision by Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

The economic effect in Lawton, which has a population of about 90,000 people, will be enhanced as military and civilian workers bring family members and businesses grow to serve this new population.

The commission also decided not to follow the Pentagon's recommendation to close the Red River Army Depot near Texarkana, Texas, a move that will cost Tinker Air Force Base some 350 jobs.

"The defense distribution depot was going to Tinker, but since they decided to keep Red River open, those jobs won't go to Tinker," said Mike Cooper, chairman of Vance Development Authority and Oklahoma Strategic Military Planning Commission. "The commission decided since we are war, we have too many vehicle maintenance concerns to close Red River."

A decision on whether Tinker will retain 125 employees in its human resources department, or whether that office will be moved to Randolph Air Force Base in San Antonio, could come today, said Cooper.

Under the recommendations released May 13 by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Vance Air Force Base is slated not only to remain open but to pick up 99 new jobs, 93 military and six civilian. Vance also is projected to gain 13 T-6 and 12 T-38 aircraft.

Rumsfeld proposes moving A-10 close air support jets from Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina and Eielson AFB in Alaska to Moody AFB in Valdosta, Ga., then dividing Moody's pilot training mission among Vance, Columbus AFB in Mississippi and Laughlin AFB near Del Rio, Texas. Vance would receive some of Moody's Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training and Introduction to Fighter Fundamentals training under the plan.

Decisions on those issues, Cooper said, should come today.

Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla., who serves on the House Armed Services Committee and whose district includes Tinker Air Force Base and Fort Sill, said Wednesday \$200 million in construction activity is anticipated with the movement of additional troops to Fort Sill.

"This is clearly great news for southwest Oklahoma," he said. "This was a very big milestone today. The folks at Fort Bliss in Texas had put on a major effort to try to keep that facility from moving to Oklahoma."

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Vance AFB, Okla.



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Inhofe, a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, praised the commission's decision and said "the effects of this move will be much greater as families and businesses take root in the Fort Sill community."

Lawton City Manager Larry Mitchell said the city is working on ways to handle the expected growth.

Voters in Lawton approved a \$30 million bond measure last year that will help refurbish schools. Work also is planned to build a second water treatment plant for the area.

"It means a 10 percent growth in our population, and we're looking at a significant increase in our employment base, which obviously is good news, and there will be issues we need to address to support and accommodate that increase," Mitchell said. "With the increased population, we will see increased demand for housing and infrastructure improvements."

Mitchell said Fort Sill expansion proposals reassure the community the Army post, which is an economic mainstay of the area, will remain a fixture in the Army's plan for the future.

There had been concern early this year one or more of Oklahoma's five major military installations may be cut, but none were listed for closure under Pentagon recommendations in the spring, and Cole said he is confident it won't change.

The commission plans to submit its final recommendations to President Bush by Sept. 8. The president will either forward the report to Congress or return it to the commission for further evaluation.

News -- Eagle senior writer Jeff Mullin and The Associated Press contributed to this story.

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